

REMARKS

Summary

Claims 1-3 are pending in the application and all of the claims were rejected. Claims 4-20 have been added. No new matter has been added as a result of this amendment.

Objection to Claims

Claim 1 was objected to as the Examiner indicated that it is unclear whether the second operating knob is one knob or a plurality of knobs. Applicants traverse the objection. Claim 1 recites that the lighted switch device comprises, inter alia, a plurality of second operating knobs disposed around the first operating knob. Among the plurality of second operating knobs is a pair of adjacent second operating knobs. Thus, it is clear that the claim recites multiple second operating knobs.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ishiguro (6,176,589). Applicants traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 recites that the lighted switch device comprises, inter alia, first and second operating knobs and a light-shielding member. The second operating knobs are disposed around the first operating knob. The second operating knobs include a pair of adjacent second operating knobs. The light-shielding member is disposed at one of the pair of adjacent second operating knobs. The light-shielding member also protrudes in a gap between the pair of adjacent second operating knobs. Such an arrangement, for example permits the gap to be decreased, thereby decreasing the size of the switch device.

Ishiguro does not anticipate or disclose such an arrangement. In Ishiguro, the second operating knobs 35 are disposed adjacent to the first operating knob 18, but are not disposed around the first operating knob.

Nor does Ishiguro teach a light-shielding member that protrudes in a gap between adjacent second operating knobs. As illustrated in Fig. 5 of Ishiguro, the light-shielding member 32c is integral with the case 32. The second operating knobs 35 are surrounded by the light-shielding member 32c, but nowhere does Ishiguro

teach that the light-shielding member 32c protrudes into a gap between adjacent second operating knobs 35.

For at least these reasons, Claim 1 is patentable over the cited reference.

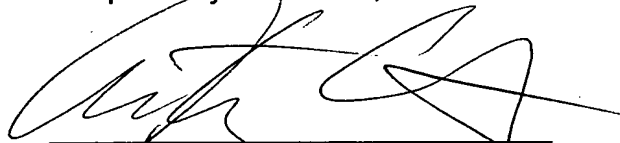
Dependent Claims 2-15 are dependent upon an allowable claim. Thus, the dependent claims are allowable, without more. Claim 2, for example, is also independently patentable over Ishiguro. Claim 2 recites that an end of the light-shielding member is inserted into a recess in one of the pair of adjacent second operating knobs.

For at least reasons similar to those above, new Claims 16-20 are also patentable over the cited reference.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments and arguments above, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance and seek an allowance thereof. If for any reason the Examiner is unable to allow the application in the next Office Action and believes that a telephone interview would be helpful to resolve any remaining issues, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



Anthony P. Curtis, Ph.D.
Registration No. 46,193
Attorney for Applicant

BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE
P.O. BOX 10395
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611-5599
(312) 321-4200